

News Article  
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## Hundreds of Fathers Gather to Better Themselves

Men seeking to become better fathers were inspired and helped towards achieving that goal at the 6<sup>th</sup> Annual Milwaukee Fatherhood Summit. The two day event held at Destiny Youth Plaza attracted hundreds of fathers to the event organized by the Milwaukee Fatherhood Initiative (MFI) and the Social Development Commission (SDC).



**Richard Johnson of SDC Healthy Relationship talks with a young dad at the Fatherhood Summit.**

The Fatherhood Summit presented workshops and discussion groups that engaged and educated men on ways to become more effective fathers in



**Lamar Tyler discusses his film "Men Ain't Boys" at the Fatherhood Summit.**

the lives of their children. Lamar Tyler of Tyler Media presented his documentary film “Men Ain’t Boys” which sparked several lively and profound discussions including one with a group of young Milwaukee fathers on what it means to be a good dad. A Job, Health and Resource Fair helped connect men to valuable resources and Child Support and Drivers License Recovery assisted many fathers with their services.



**SDC CEO Deborah Blanks welcomes participants to the Milwaukee Fatherhood Summit along with County Exec Chris Abele and Mayor Tom Barrett.**

The goal of the Fatherhood Summit was to provide the resources and information needed by men to better themselves and the success of the event can be clearly seen in the example of Charlie Doram. The Milwaukee man attended the first Fatherhood Summit six years ago where he sought a way to improve his life and his ability to be a successful father. He connected with a

representative of Springfield College who encouraged him to enroll at the school.



**Charlie Doram (right) talks with Dr. Earlise Ward about their UW-Madison project on depression during the Fatherhood Summit.**

Six years later, after earning BS and MS degrees and becoming a licensed mental health and substance abuse counselor, Doram was back at the Fatherhood Summit, but this time as a presenter. Doram was part of a University of Wisconsin-Madison project that is recruiting men to take part in the development of a depression treatment program aimed specifically at African American men. He said that it

gave him great satisfaction to return to the Summit and help give back to the community after being helped himself at the first Summit.

The Fatherhood Summit also featured a special dinner honoring Grandfathers. Young students who won an essay contest read their heartfelt descriptions in person to their grandfathers about the impact that they had on their lives. A group of fathers were also presented during the Summit with the Al Holmes Super Father Award.

Feedback from participating men was positive for the Fatherhood Summit. Surveys were conducted to get input on what worked and what could be added to future summits. One father gave high marks to the event. He was able to get help with getting his drivers license back while being able to talk to potential employers about a job.



**Akpan Blake shares a special Al Holmes Fatherhood Award with his young son.**



**A Quad Graphics job recruiter talks with a Fatherhood Summit participant about openings at her firm.**

The 6<sup>th</sup> Annual Fatherhood Summit was made possible by support of many sponsors and volunteers who helped make the event a success. As one participant put it, the resources offered helped many men get more control over their lives. By becoming stronger fathers, the Fatherhood Summit participants are helping create strong families and eventually stronger communities.